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TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL READOUT - JULY 16, 2008

REF: SECSTATE 73794

Classified By: CDA Richard G. Olson, Jr., for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C/NF) Summary from the NAC Meeting:

-- Afghanistan: Much of the Council's discussion focused on the situation in Afghanistan in relation to its neighbors. D/CMC Eikenberry stated that the Indian Embassy bombing will not affect the transfer of security responsibility for Kabul city to the ANSF in August, and reported on the July 13 attack on the Combat Outpost (COP) Wanat in Kunar province. Admiral Moreno provided the operational brief, reporting that Pakistani security forces had suspended operations in FATA and NWFP and will withdraw from Swat in August, and that Opposing Militant Forces (OMF) continue to harass Pakistani forces and are pushing out civilian government officials. Acting SCR Jochems briefed by VTC from Kabul, stating that Afghans perceive the insurgency is limiting their freedom of movement. He proposed NATO support the request to increase the size of the ANA, focus more of building good governance, and continue its civilian engagement with Pakistan. U.S. Charge Olson expressed concerns about NATO's public messaging about the attack, which had played into the OMF's hands. UK PermRep Eldon suggested the NAC hold an informal discussion on the meaning of counterinsurgency and the Alliance's role in it, and the SYG agreed. The Canadian PermRep asked for an assessment of the ISI's role in Afghanistan and suggested NATO work to maintain the momentum in its relationship with Pakistan.

-- Balkans: The SYG highlighted the success of the recent Kosovo Donor's Conference in Brussels, and stressed the need for better and closer coordination among all international actors operating in Kosovo. The D/CMC briefed the Council on

the status of KFOR's new tasks and informed the Council about a concept for the resettlement plan for the KPC. There continues to be a shortfall in the Military Civil Advisory Division and NATO Training Teams (MCAD-NTT), and the D/CMC pressed nations to provide voluntary national contributions for key staffing positions. SHAPE updated the Council on current operations and announced that on July 8 and 9 a Security Sector Reform (SSR) team from JFC Naples met with the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Defense and General Staff Officials.

-- Africa - Support to the AU: The SYG reiterated the CMC's July 2 request for airlift of the Burundi battalion for AMISOM, noting this request remains unfulfilled. The Czech PermRep announced 15,000 euros for the lift as a symbolic gesture.

-- Iraq: Charge Olson urged Allies to contribute trainers to the NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) to allow the mission to fulfill the new training requested by PM Maliki and approved by the NAC, in particular for border security training and police forensics training. The SYG said the NAC would hold a discussion in early fall about NATO's long-term relationship with Iraq.

-- Response to Terrorism: The Turkish Charge updated the NAC on the ongoing investigation of the terrorist attack on the U.S. consulate in Istanbul.

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-- Statements on Political Subjects: The French PermRep briefed Allies on the July 13 Paris summit establishing the Mediterranean Union.

-- AOB: Charge Olson provided an assessment of the Iranian missile exercises held on July 9 and 10, and said that they indicated Iran was determined to develop a ballistic missile capability that threatened international security. The Croatian Charge informed Allies that the Croatian Parliament had decided to send two transport helicopters to Kosovo in support of KFOR.

-- Priorities of the French EU Presidency: A readout of the briefing by French State Secretary Jouyet on France's priorities for its EU Presidency will appear septel.

END SUMMARY.

Afghanistan

12. (C/NF) The SYG noted the strong July 15 statement from the Afghan government blaming Pakistan for security problems along the border area. He assessed that NATO may share some of the same concerns, but a "public blame game" is counterproductive, and Afghanistan's suspending some bilateral meetings was not helpful, although the Tri-Partite Commission (TPC) was not affected. He noted that SHAPE will brief the NAC on July 22 regarding ISAF's planning for its role in voter registration and elections security.

13. (C/NF) Deputy Chairman of the Military Committee (D/CMC) Eikenberry added that the TPC meets at the 4-star level three times per year and last met in December 2007. COMISAF McKiernan plans to increase the frequency of the meetings, and Pakistani officials recently told DASG Pardew that the meetings are a high priority for their CHOD. The next meeting is scheduled for August 12) 14 in Kabul. Six Border Coordination Centers (BCCs) are to be built and staffed jointly by ANSF, ISAF, and Pakistani security forces. The first, in Khyber, comes online soon and construction on the BCC in Lwara began July 1. D/CMC Eikenberry also noted that the Indian Embassy bombing will not affect the transfer of security responsibility to the ANSF for Kabul city in

August, and that this is a phased transfer and ISAF will retain responsibility for securing its own forces and convoys. He added that suicide attacks will remain a threat regardless of who exercises command.

14. (C/NF) D/CMC Eikenberry reported on the July 13 attack on the Combat Outpost (COP) Wanat in Kunar province that killed nine U.S. soldiers, injured 16 U.S. and 4 Afghan troops. 120 OMF under Mullah Osmar infiltrated the nearby village the night before, maintained radio silence and initiated the attack, which lasted for four hours. The attack was repelled. This event could signal the beginning more pre-coordinated, direct attacks on outposts, possibly the result of new capabilities available to the Opposing Militant Forces (OMF) as a result of the increased freedom of movement they now enjoy in Pakistan. Charge Olson noted that our information on the attack was similar, emphasizing that the attack was repelled and ISAF held its ground. He expressed concerns about NATO's public messaging about the attack,

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noting that an ISAF spokesperson had called it a huge and unprecedented attack, when our message should have been that "we established a post in a critical infiltration area, the enemy challenged us, and we held our ground despite the tragic loss of nine soldiers." The SYG agreed and said he would take up the issue with ISAF in Kabul, but added that it is a complicated media environment with statements coming out from the U.S., ISAF, and the GoA. The SYG said the fact that ISAF has announced it is disestablishing COP Wanat makes it harder to put a positive spin on the attack, especially if such attacks are in fact on the increase. D/CMC Eikenberry noted that several larger OMF attacks were repelled in 2006 and 2007 and cautioned against drawing over broad conclusions from one incident. But he concluded that there has been an increase in "complex attacks" in RC-East since last year, due to the safe havens on the Pakistani side, the evolving tactics of the OMF, the influx of new OMF fighters, and increased coordination among different OMF groups.

15. (C/NF) Admiral Moreno provided the operational brief, reporting that Pakistani security forces had suspended operations in FATA and NWFP and will withdraw from Swat in August. OMF continue to harass Pakistani forces and are pushing out civilian government officials. An increase in food prices and an increase in suicide attacks could undermine Pakistani government attempts to enhance stability. He reported that DefMin Wardak formally requested at the July JCMB meeting to increase the ANA size from 86,000 to 122,000 troops, but no final decision is expected until the next JCMB in September. Investigations are ongoing into five cases of civilian casualties.

16. (C/NF) Moreno said that in RC-Capital, OMF activities are within seasonal norms, but they have the capacity to carry out "spectacular" attacks in Kabul. The Taliban denied carrying out the Indian Embassy bombing, probably to avoid blame for the large number of civilian casualties. The Kunduz-Baglan corridor continues to be the hotspot in RC-North. In RC-West, Farah province is most active as a transit area for OMF, with a particular danger of IEDs and asymmetrical attacks on the ring road. An increase in OMF activity is expected in Badghis province. In RC-South, the threat remains high, with IEDs and an increase in kidnappings, particularly along the ring road and other key roads. The OMF are trying to restrict ISAF movement but are avoiding direct contact. There is an increasing OMF focus on northern Helmand. The U.S. 24th MEU has extended its mission in Helmand through early November. The OMF are active in RC-East, particularly in border provinces and are focusing on outposts. He said the arrival of Polish and French units will help.

17. (C/NF) NATO Acting Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) Jochems briefed by VTC from Kabul, stating that there is a perception among Afghans that their freedom of movement is

increasingly restricted by the insurgency. The safety of highway travel is an increasing concern as insurgents focus on kidnappings and many Afghans believe they may target the Kabul-Jalalabad road. OMF targeting of district leaders, ANP, schools, and high-profile targets such as the Indian Embassy also contribute to this perception.

¶18. (C/NF) To counter this perception among the Afghans, Jochems made three proposals. First he recommended that NATO

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support the Afghans request to increase the size of the ANA, since it is essential to increasingly put an "Afghan face" on security. Second, he said there should be more focus on good governance, since there is a direct relationship between the ability to hold terrain and good governance. While NATO is not in the lead in this area, it could do more by making better use of reporting from POLADs and PRTs. He suggested a UN or NATO-led civ-mil conference on how to enhance governance. Third, he said more civilian NATO engagement with the new government in Pakistan would be helpful. He commented that the Afghan government's suspension of three meetings with Pakistan was not as damaging as it looks since the meetings were of limited importance and did not include the TPC. Jochems also commented that Karzai is often outspoken against Pakistan, but is much less vocal against homegrown Pashtun insurgents. While this may be due to election politics it is not helpful.

¶19. (C/NF) Charge Olson noted that the GoA announcement criticizing Pakistan was more measured than it first appears.

The Afghans are feeling great pressure due to the border insecurity, but only canceled three lesser meetings and not the TPC. He stated that the U.S. has been working intensively bilaterally with the Pakistanis (including a recent Admiral Mullen visit and POTUS's statement yesterday referring to the Taliban as the "common enemy.") He added that the U.S. hopes to have Karzai and Gilani meet on the margins of the upcoming South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit in Sri Lanka.

¶10. (C/NF) UK PermRep Eldon agreed with the U.S. analysis of the Afghan suspension of some meetings with the Pakistanis, noting that Karzai told British General David Richards yesterday this was only a suspension of three meetings, not of Afghan-Pakistani relations. Eldon commented that the more he thought about Jochems' comments on governance, the more he believed it came down to counter-insurgency (COIN) strategy. He proposed the NAC have a discussion in an informal forum on what COIN means, what it involves, and where the Alliance fits into it. The SYG agreed, though he pointed out the term COIN is controversial with some Allies.

¶11. (C/NF) The Spanish PermRep reinforced Jochems comments on the importance of building governance. Canadian PermRep McRae reiterated a point he has made before, that the "Pashtun belt" is a single cross-border theater. He said there had been charges of the ISI's involvement in the Indian Embassy bombing, the Independence Day parade attacks, and the Quetta Shura. He asked for an assessment of the ISI's role and the validity of these charges. He also urged NATO to continue its engagement with Pakistan and not wait until the SYG's trip in October as its next step. The SYG responded that activities are ongoing, including a NATO military team visiting Islamabad to discuss the set up of a liaison office.

Balkans

¶12. (C/NF) The SYG highlighted the success of the recent Kosovo Donor's Conference in Brussels, noting its importance for regional stability and for increasing reconstruction within Kosovo. He also stressed the need for better and closer coordination among all international actors operating

in Kosovo. The D/CMC briefed the Council on the status of KFOR's new tasks, saying that following a July 8 meeting between the KPC Coordinator, and representatives from KFOR, SHAPE, and the UN Development Program (UNDP), the KPC coordinator developed a concept for the resettlement plan for the KPC. The plan calls for KPC dissolution by June 15, 2009, and will be continually refined until the end of July. KFOR and JFC Naples are reviewing requirements for the standup of the Kosovo Security Force and are looking to provide more clarity on the requirements by September. The D/CMC mentioned that there continues to be a shortfall in the Military Civil Advisory Division and NATO Training Teams (MCAD-NTT) with only half of the slots filled. The D/CMC pressed nations to provide voluntary national contributions for key staffing positions. SHAPE updated the Council on current operations, saying that KFOR remains focused on maintaining a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement in Kosovo and preventing non-compliant group activities. He also stated that on July 8 - 9, a Security Sector Reform (SSR) team from JFC Naples met with the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Defense and General Staff Officials.

 Africa - Support to the AU

¶13. (C/NF) The SYG reiterated his appeal to Allies to provide airlift for the Burundian battalion that is participating in the UN-AU mission in Darfur, as requested by the CMC on July 12. As at previous Council sessions, he noted lift could be provided through commercial means since a number of private companies are willing and able to fly into Somalia, at an estimated cost of 650,000 euros for the battalion. The SYG emphasized the importance of NATO being seen as a reliable partner to the AU. The Czech PermRep announced a contribution of 15,000 euros for the lift, noting that this is primarily a symbolic offering that hopefully would encourage other Allies to contribute.

 Iraq

¶14. (C/NF) Charge Olson reiterated (reftel) points in the recent demarche to Allied capitals encouraging contributions to fill the new training missions recently approved by the NAC for the NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I). These new missions were requested by Iraqi PM Maliki and include Navy and Air Force leadership training, forensic and border security training, and filling current shortfalls of training billets. Olson urged Allies to consider ways to re-energize NATO's collective commitment to helping Iraq by enhancing NTM-I with more trainers and advisors.

¶15. (C/NF) The SYG said the NAC should discuss NATO's long-term relationship with Iraq, and said he would put it on the agenda for an informal meeting of PermReps after the summer break.

 Response to Terrorism

¶16. (C/NF) The Turkish Charge updated the NAC on the ongoing investigation of the terrorist attack on the U.S. consulate in Istanbul. He informed Allies that five police casualties (three dead and two wounded) resulted from the attack. Also, with regards to the perpetrators, he told Allies that three terrorists died and that Turkish police have arrested four additional suspects

Statements on Political Subjects

¶17. (C/NF) The French PermRep briefed Allies on the July 13 Paris summit establishing Mediterranean Union Summit. At the conclusion of the summit, heads of state and government from all EU members and all Mediterranean countries (except Libya, which was invited but declined to attend) agreed to establish a secretariat for the union, hold biennial summits, and work to improve cooperation on climate change, land and sea transport, energy, and cultural/educational exchanges.

AOB

¶18. (C/NF) Charge Olson presented the U.S. assessment of the Iranian missile exercises held on July 9 and 10 drawing IC-provided REL/NATO material. He said that up to nine ballistic missiles and battlefield rockets were fired during Iran's Noble Prophet III Exercise. Of these nine, one was a Shahab-3 intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM) and eight were short range ballistic missiles or rockets. Although Iran claimed to have fired a 2,000 km Shahab-3 missile, the U.S. assessed that only a 1,300 km variant was launched. Iranian preparations for the missile exercises were done quickly, most likely to simulate wartime conditions. Charge Olson noted that the missile firings indicated Iran was determined to develop a ballistic missile capability that posed a threat to international security. He went on to say that the recent exercises should eliminate doubts that the Iranians would have long range ballistic missiles within 10-20 years.

¶19. (C/NF) The Croatian Charge, Drazen Hrastic, announced that the Croatian Parliament had decided to send two transport helicopters and their support crews to Kosovo in support of KFOR. He added that this decision had received unanimous parliamentary support.
OLSON